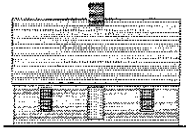




Nehemiah Royce House
c 1672

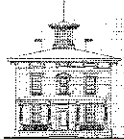


Joseph Halesbe House
c 1780

The Wallingford Historic Preservation Trust



Muddy River School House
c 1810



Franklin and Harriet Johnson Mansion
c 1866

P.O. Box 362, Wallingford, CT 06492
Tel: (203) 265-4025

<http://wallingfordct.com/vhpt>
Email: info@vhpt.org

TESTIMONY OF STEVE LAZARUS ON BILL #5882

Good morning distinguished Senators and Representatives. My name is Steve Lazarus and with me is Carolyn Massoni. We are here this morning as representatives of the Wallingford Historic Preservation Trust in support of Bill #5882.

The Wallingford Historic Preservation Trust is working to preserve and restore seven historic and architecturally significant buildings, mostly in the center of Wallingford, as a means of not only preserving our local history, but also to help in attracting people to our beautiful and historic central business district. The stories of these seven buildings tell the tale not only of Wallingford, but also of significant periods in our state and nation's history.

Bill #5882 provides \$150,000 in funding to the 1672 Nehemiah Royce House, a seventeenth century building that is the oldest surviving structure in the town. Its history includes that early period of settlement when Connecticut was a dozen or so small settlements of English voyagers surrounded by miles and miles of woods and numerous native American encampments. Later, the house was used by General George Washington to address Connecticut's colonists as he made his way from the Second Continental Congress to take charge of the Continental Army in Massachusetts. In the twentieth century, the building was saved from demolition and became a museum for a number of years. The Trust has worked to gather the necessary funds – save a final \$150,000 – to make an ambitious \$600,000 restoration of this historic home possible and its reopening as a museum celebrating the town's history.

Bill #5882 also provides \$400,000 in funding to the Wallingford Welcome Center to be located on the grounds of the Franklin Johnson Mansion and American Silver Museum. The welcome center will serve as the initial point that visitors coming to town will visit. The Trust's film, called "The Fascination of Silver", highlighting the contributions of Wallingford and Meriden to the silver manufacturing industry that dominated the area from 1840 to 1980, will be shown to visitors. Other interpretative displays will tell of the various periods in town and national history: the arrival of English settlers in the seventeenth century, continued growth as an agrarian center leading up the American Revolution, the advent of the silver industry in the 1840s, the expansion of the silver industry and the coming of immigrants from Italy, Poland, Ireland, Germany and Hungary to work in those factories.

These seven historic buildings, working together to tell the tale of a community and a nation, will be a boon to downtown Wallingford and its already very much restored central business district. While other towns and cities look to theatres and arts centers as the focal point to bring people to their town, Wallingford feels that the story it can tell - represented in historic buildings and places - is an interesting one, in which every American can feel some sense of their own history involved. For all these reasons, we would ask your support of Bill #5882 to assist the Trust financially in these endeavours.